

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXI

ASHLAND, O., WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 1899

No. 27

## Why and When

In a burst of extremely refreshing innocence the *Independent* asks the following question: "When will the time come that, on such immeasurably important questions as polygamy, divorce, temperance, the Sabbath, and morals generally, the politicians will recognize that, in all their selfish electioneerings, they must take account of the votes of Christians and moralists, as well as the saloonists and gamblers."

As we read this paragraph we find ourselves wondering who is this editor of the *Independent*, and how does it happen that he apparently knows so little of the world? Has he very recently dropped from the clouds, or is he an importation from dreamland? We are told that the comfortable editorial offices of the *Independent* are situated on the top floor of one of those sky scrapers in New York, and that perhaps accounts for the super-worldliness of the editorial mind. Unconscious of the depths below him where the myriad human swarm work and welter, he calmly pursues his transcendental way, secure in the self-conscious infallibility of his intellectual cogitations.

"When will the time come, etc?" The time has already arrived, has been here this long while. Take the average constituency of an average Congressman, how many of the church members belonging to his political party ask him for a definition of his views on these questions? How many of them will decline to vote for him if his attitude is indifferent, and his influence negative, in respect to these "immeasurably important" moral problems? Will one in ten stay at home on election day, or vote for the other candidate, however much he may be opposed to these public iniquities? In this political Sodom can the Lord find fifty righteous persons, or thirty, or twenty, or ten? We will not undertake to answer these questions, but we will ask them of our readers, who live in widely separated sections of the country, in Democratic as well as Republican communities, and we invite them to give us accurate information on the following points: Are the political chances of your Congressman materially affected by his position, one way or the other, upon the questions of polygamy, divorce, temperance, or the Sabbath? What percentage of the church members in your congressional district allow this consideration to decide their votes for or against the candidate of their political party? Will our intelligent readers give us definite answers to these

two questions? It will be both interesting and instructive to get this information and lay it before our readers.

The politician is going to take account of the votes of the majority, no doubt about that. Now it is the invariable policy of the saloonists and gamblers to vote solidly for the man in whose hands their interests are safe, or at least who will let them alone. To them political preference has no other meaning. He is *their man*, be he Democrat, Republican or Populist, who will wink at their abominations, and see to it that all legislation inimical to them shall, to say the least, be embarrassed and diverted from its purpose, or nullified with compromises and paralyzed by delays. Here we have the most remarkable contrast. While the church is by no means unanimous for political righteousness, and solid in its support of public morals, the saloon and the gambling den present unbroken ranks in support of their respective and **united wickedness**. Not a man is absent. With these **solid ranks**, recruited from the indifferent, or the insincere, or the stupid church members who march with them, they usually offer to the candidate the tempting prospect of a majority, and that is precisely what your politician is looking for. He is not in the business either as a philanthropist, or a humanitarian, or a missionary, nor always as a patriot, but he is in it for fame and boodle, and he is the first man, and the keenest, to take account of these Christian votes which are ranged alongside, cheek by jowl, with the saloonist and the gambler. To make sure of that somewhat more conscientious element which can be found in some communities, who make a little noise along moral lines so as to "influence" the candidate, he will put a righteous plank in his platform which he can easily straddle, and the soft headed children of light are satisfied, and bring him their votes, like the head of John the Baptist, on a charger. The saloonist and the gambler know very well, for the politician has already told them, that platforms are not intended to stand on, but to get in on, and consequently it is not the platform they care a fig about, but the *man*. They know that *their man* may be depended upon, no matter what sort of a platform sop he may throw to the nice people. It is all a great weariness. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light," and so long as this remains true the cause of public righteousness, between its fool friends and its alert enemies, will hardly have a fair show in the earth.